

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) An automated, computer-implemented method for carrying out financial transactions within a Central Securities Depository (CSD), comprising an automated clearing process implemented by a computer and an automated settlement process implemented by a computer, the clearing process ~~being the process of preparing the a transactions transaction~~ for the settlement process, ~~the clearing process comprising~~ using the following automated sub ~~processessub-process~~ steps implemented by a computer:

- selecting a settlement rule to be followed in the clearing process, the rule defining how the transaction is to be settled,
- defining a settlement obligation group, ~~said group comprising~~ including a number of settlement instructions ~~that all have to be settled at the same time,~~
- “locking in” of the assets to which the transaction ~~concern~~ concerns, the locking-in having the effect of reserving said assets for a specific settlement ~~instruction,~~

and the settlement process ~~comprising~~ includes the following automated sub ~~processessub-~~ process steps implemented by a computer:

- selecting transfer instructions for all settlement obligations belonging to said settlement obligation group, said transfer instructions being irrevocable instructions to transfer (the locked-in) assets between participants in the CSD,
- checking that ~~all~~ said transfer instructions are carried out successfully, and
- reporting the result of the settlement to the participants involved.

2. (currently amended) An automated system for carrying out financial transactions within

a Central Securities Depository (CSD), said system comprising:

a computer having an input and an output,

wherein the computer is configured to perform an automated function for a clearing process and an automated function for a settlement process, the function for the computer being configured to implement the clearing process function being arranged to prepare by preparing a transactions transaction for the settlement process, with said function for the clearing process comprising using the following computer implemented sub-functions:

- an automated sub-function for the selection of a settlement rule to be utilised in the clearing process, the rule defining how the transaction is to be settled,
- an automated sub-function for the definition of a settlement obligation group, ~~said group comprising~~ including a number of settlement instructions ~~that all have to be settled at the same time, and~~
- an automated sub-function for the “locking in” of the assets to which the transaction concern, the locking-in having the effect of the system reserving said assets for a specific settlement instruction, and

~~with wherein the computer is configured to perform the function for the settlement process comprising~~ function using the following computer-implemented sub-functions:

- an automated sub-function for selecting transfer instructions for all settlement obligations belonging to said settlement obligation group, said transfer instructions being irrevocable instructions to transfer the locked-in assets between participants in the CSD,

- an automated sub-function for checking that ~~all~~said transfer instructions are carried out successfully, and
- an automated sub-function for reporting the result of the settlement to the participants involved.

3. (New) An automated, computer-implemented apparatus for carrying out financial transactions within a Central Securities Depository (CSD), comprising:

a clearing computer for preparing a transaction for the settlement process and including:

means for selecting a settlement rule to be followed in the clearing process, the rule defining how the transaction is to be settled,

means for defining a settlement obligation group including a number of settlement instructions to be settled at the same time,

means for locking in of the assets to which the transaction concerns, the locking-in having the effect of reserving said assets for a specific settlement, and

a settlement computer including:

means for selecting transfer instructions for all settlement obligations belonging to said settlement obligation group, said transfer instructions being irrevocable instructions to transfer the locked-in assets between participants in the CSD,

means for checking that said transfer instructions are carried out successfully, and

means for reporting the result of the settlement to the participants involved.